



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



Substitute House Bill No. 7043

Public Act No. 99-288

An Act Concerning Education Accountability

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) On or before July 1, 2000, each local and regional board of education shall review and revise its policies for promotion from grade to grade and for graduation in order to ensure that such policies foster student achievement, reduce the incidence of social promotion and meet the requirements of this section. On and after said date, such policies shall: (1) Include objective criteria for the promotion and graduation of students, (2) provide for the measuring of the progress of students against such criteria and the reporting of such information to parents and students, (3) include alternatives to promotion such as transition programs, and (4) provide for supplemental services, and such policies may require students who have substantial academic deficiencies that jeopardize their eligibility for promotion or graduation to attend after school programs, summer school or other programs offered by the school district that are designed to assist students in remedying such deficiencies.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (a) On or before October 1, 1999, and biennially thereafter, the State Board of Education shall prepare a list of elementary and middle schools, by school district, that are in need of improvement based on student performance and performance trends on the state-wide mastery examinations pursuant to section 10-14n of the general statutes. The Department of Education shall notify each local and regional board of education of the schools in its district that are on the list and, if more than one school in a school district is on the list, the department shall advise the local or regional board of education on which of such schools are most in need of improvement.

(b) On or before January 1, 2000, and biennially thereafter, each local and regional board of education that has a school on the list, through its superintendent of schools, shall meet with the Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, to discuss the process for improving school performance described in subsection (c) of this section. The commissioner shall require the local or regional board of education to undergo such process for such school, except that if more than one school in the school district is on the list, the local or regional board of education shall prioritize the schools on the list

and develop a timetable for such schools to undergo such process. Such timetable and list shall be approved by the commissioner.

(c) The local or regional board of education shall require the school to: (1) Develop an improvement plan, and (2) take the steps necessary to become accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The improvement plan shall be submitted to the local or regional board of education for its approval and, upon such approval, shall be implemented beginning the following school year. The improvement plan may provide for site-based management of the school and shall be developed in consultation with the school's principal, teachers and the parents of students attending the school. The Department of Education shall provide technical assistance to the school on the development of the plan. The local or regional board of education shall provide assistance to the school to improve its operation under the plan and to obtain accreditation. The commissioner may require the local or regional board of education to reallocate federal and state categorical assistance provided to the school district to implement the plan.

(d) The local or regional board of education shall monitor progress made by the school under the improvement plan. If two years after the date of approval of the improvement plan, the board of education finds that the school has not made sufficient progress, the board of education shall develop a plan for such school that requires the board to take one or more of the following actions in order to improve student achievement: (1) Close and reconstitute the school, (2) restructure the school in terms of the grades included or the programs offered, or both, (3) provide for site-based management of the school, and (4) allow students in the attendance area of the school to attend other public schools in the school district. The local or regional board of education may include in such plan a provision for the transfer of employees in conjunction with any such action. The local or regional board of education shall submit its plan to the commissioner for approval and, upon such approval, shall implement the plan.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (a) Each local and regional board of education for a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p of the general statutes, shall, within available appropriations, require the schools under its jurisdiction to provide additional instruction, unless the school principal determines that such instruction is not necessary based on the recommendations of the student's teacher, (1) for the 2000-2001 school year, and each school year thereafter, to each student who fails to meet the state-wide standard for remedial assistance on the fourth grade mastery examination under section 10-14n of the general statutes, and (2) for the 2001-2002 school year, and each school year thereafter, to each student who fails to meet the state-wide standard for remedial assistance on the sixth grade mastery examination under section 10-14n. The instruction shall be designed to address the student's deficiencies and may include tutoring, an after school or school vacation program, or a week-end school program that is funded in accordance with section 4 of this act.

(b) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, each local and regional board of education for a priority school district shall require (1) for the 2000-2001 school year, and each school year thereafter, students in the schools under its jurisdiction who fail to reach the state-wide standard for remedial assistance on such fourth grade mastery examination to attend school the summer following the examination on which they failed to reach such standard and (2) for the 2001-2002 school year, and each school year thereafter, students in the schools under its jurisdiction who fail to reach the state-wide standard for remedial assistance on such sixth grade mastery examination to attend school the summer following the examination on which they failed to reach such standard. The superintendent of schools may exempt an individual student from such requirement, upon the recommendation of the school principal, based on the student's progress with the additional instruction provided pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. If a student does not receive such an exemption, has been offered the opportunity to attend a summer school program and fails to attend summer school, the local or regional board of education shall not promote the student to the next grade.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Education shall award grants, within available appropriations, to local and regional boards of education for priority school districts pursuant to section 10-266p of the general statutes, for summer school programs required pursuant to section 3 of this act, and week-end school programs. Eligibility for grants pursuant to this section shall be determined for a five-year period based on a school district's designation as a priority school district for the initial year of application. In order to receive a grant, an eligible board of education shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds to the Department of Education, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes.

(b) Each priority school district shall receive a grant based on the ratio of the number of resident students, as defined in subdivision (22) of section 10-262f of the general statutes, in the district to the total number of resident students in all priority school districts.

(c) No funds received pursuant to this section shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding to the local or regional board of education for summer school or week-end school programs.

(d) Expenditure reports shall be filed with the department as requested by the commissioner. Local or regional boards of education shall refund (1) any unexpended amounts at the close of the program for which the grant is awarded, and (2) any amounts not expended in accordance with an approved grant application.

Sec. 5. Section 10-265g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof:

(a) Each local and regional board of education for a priority school district shall offer a summer reading program, as described in subsection (d) of section 10-265f, to children enrolled in kindergarten in the schools under its jurisdiction who are determined by their [teacher] teachers to need additional reading and reading readiness instruction.

(b) For each school year commencing on or after July 1, 1999, each local and regional board of education for a priority school district shall require the schools under its jurisdiction to evaluate the reading level of students enrolled in grades one to three, inclusive, in the middle of the school year and at the end of the school year. A student shall be determined to be substantially deficient in reading based on measures established by the State Board of Education. If a student is determined to be substantially deficient in reading [below grade level] based on: (1) The middle of the year evaluation, the school shall notify the parents or guardian of the student of such result; and (2) the end of the year evaluation, the school shall develop a personal reading plan for such student. The personal reading plan shall include measures to improve the student's reading level, such as tutoring, a transitional class, or a summer reading program as described in subsection (d) of section 10-265f. Promotion of such student from grade to grade shall be based on documented progress in achieving the goals of the personal reading plan or demonstrated reading proficiency. [commensurate with grade level.] If a decision is made to promote a student who is substantially deficient in reading [below grade level] from third to fourth grade, the school principal shall provide written justification for such promotion to the superintendent of schools. [Information on the number of such promotions shall be included in the strategic school profile report pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-220.] A personal reading plan shall be maintained for a student who is substantially deficient in reading [below grade level until he is reading at grade level] until the student achieves a satisfactory level of proficiency.

(c) The superintendent of schools shall report to the Commissioner of Education the information such superintendent receives pursuant to subsection (b) of this section regarding the number of students who are substantially deficient in reading and are promoted from third to fourth grade. The State Board of Education shall prepare and publish a report containing such information.

Sec. 6. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

Approved July 19, 1999

Co-sponsors of HB-7043

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